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Panel 2: Strategic Learning Environments
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The New Normal in International Education

Any discussion of the “New Normal” for the U.S. universities cannot ignore the far-reaching transformations in higher education that are underway internationally. Consider the following:



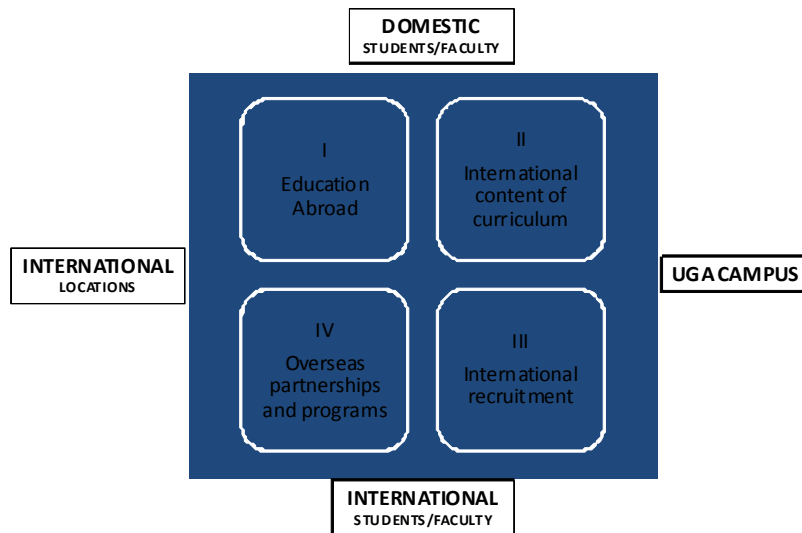
- European countries are in the process of fundamentally restructuring their higher education sector. The Bologna Process seeks to create a system that ensures comparability of degrees across the continent and make explicit the learning and career outcomes associated with these degrees. The result is expected to be a European Higher Education Area that promotes internal mobility and is attractive to students around the world.
- China, India, Korea, and other countries in Asia and around the world that have a major source of international students to the United States have begun a heavy phase of investment in their own higher education systems. The motivation is to retain more of their homegrown talent and to ramp up the research and development infrastructure.
- Countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom aggressively entered the market for international students following a growing awareness that these students play a significant role in university research and enrich the national talent pool.
- Many universities have begun to establish overseas outposts or branch campuses and to enter into programmatic collaborations with foreign partners. These efforts allow them to enroll students who would not otherwise travel to their campus and to expand their scholarly networks.
- New players, beyond public and private universities, are reshaping the international higher education scene. These include proprietary and for-profit institutions, third-party providers, and commission-based recruiting agents.

What these developments suggest is that, in the coming years, American universities will be functioning in a vastly different global context than the one that has guided our programs and planning over the past half century. It will be those universities who are the most agile and adept

at adjusting to this new international context that will thrive and remain competitive in the coming decades.

Adjustment to the international New Normal demands that we embark on a comprehensive process of internationalization. This process involves a broad swath of activities that can be conceptualized as arrayed along two dimensions: where the activity takes place (home or abroad) and to whom it is most directly targeted (domestic or international students/faculty). The schematic below displays how these dimensions naturally lead to four types of activities.

Internationalization: Dimensions and Scope



Education Abroad

Education abroad refers to programs, ranging in length from a few weeks to an entire year, through which students further their education in a foreign country. It includes traditional study abroad, international service learning, research abroad, and international internships.

The value and benefits of education abroad are clear and compelling. The positive outcomes include becoming more proficient in a foreign language, becoming more comfortable living and working in a different culture, gaining a significant cross-cultural understanding, and improving interpersonal and communication skills. Meaningful international experiences have been shown to expand the imagination of students and stimulate greater creativity. These are must-have “global competencies” for students in the current context.

What is most critical now is to ensure that these programs are accessible to all students. This is best achieved by offering a diverse range of programs in terms of duration, geographic destination, and discipline. It also means that we have to promote their affordability and build scholarship support.

International Content in the Curriculum

International education is also furthered by infusing the curriculum “at home” with international content. There are infinite ways in which this can be achieved. Examples include:

- Considering and articulating the international learning outcomes in every class;
- Inviting International guest lecturers in the classroom, using international examples, comparisons, etc.
- Using distance education/technology to create “blended” classes that enroll students from more than one county, the use of online virtual classrooms (such as in Second Life), assigning group projects that involve international teams;
- Developing “Internationalization at home” opportunities involving service learning and other types of projects in local immigrant communities.

Curriculum internationalization will ensure that the benefits of internationalization are not restricted to those that are able to travel abroad for studies but are seen by all students.

International student recruitment

The intellectual and economic benefits of international students to the university and the larger community are now well documented. International students also serve as powerful agents or catalysts of internationalization, providing many American students with their first contact with another culture. Their presence in our classes brings in diverse perspectives, broadens the scope of discussions, and helps shatter stereotypes.

What is most important now is to ensure that there is meaningful interaction between domestic and international students. In the absence of proactive efforts to create an environment for such exchanges, international students often find it comfortable to remain within co-ethnic networks. And many American undergraduate students report being nervous and intimidated when striking up a conversation with international students. With the right sort of planning and program activities, however, we can encourage such interactions. These include:

- Study groups and team projects can be strategically organized to bring together students from diverse backgrounds.
- International students can provide training in cross-cultural communication for faculty and students conducting research or going on a study abroad.
- Overseas alumni can be invaluable partners in publicizing our geography programs to students in their country.

Overseas partnerships and programs

Research and innovation in the contemporary environment is increasingly structured around large, interdisciplinary, and international clusters of scholars and institutions. There is

considerable evidence that when information flows openly among stakeholders researching solutions in a similar field, you create the right conditions for innovation and discovery. Investors and talent move in and reinforce these successes. A key to building a university's research capacity, therefore, is creating international networks and conditions through strategic partnerships and programs.

One approach is to build international research partnerships with academic partners that reinforce and complement a university's strengths. These are just the sort of collaborations that are currently being sought by foundations and federal funding agencies. These types of partnerships also have the potential to appeal to local business leaders, immigrant and heritage ethnic communities and could attract additional private funding.

Another approach is through participation in international consortia. The past decade has seen an extraordinary increase in consortial arrangements for research and scholarship. These range from simple online discussion networks to more highly formalized multi-institutional partnerships that support scholarly exchanges in specific disciplines. These partnerships allow an easy entry into the world of international collaboration and can lead to rich bilateral relationships as well.

In conclusion, it is important to remember that we cannot reflect on the new normal in higher education without recognizing the significant transformations that are taking place in the international context. These transformations are challenging universities to reexamine how they have traditionally approached student learning, faculty research and collaboration, and campus climate. It is those universities that are most flexible and adept at adjusting to the new international environment that will be the leaders in an era of the New Normal. The challenges and potential rewards of internationalization could not be greater.

Lloyd P. Rieber
Professor of Learning Design and Instructional Technology

Anyone who works closely with technology knows that the "new normal" changes all the time. We come to expect a constant barrage of new things and have to decide whether the latest innovation should be taken seriously or is merely the latest hype.

For example, as I write this in April, 2010, the latest innovation is Apple's iPad. As expected, many are touting this as a revolution in personal computing. Others are not so convinced. We will have to wait and see. If anyone attending the 2020 Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium looks back in the archive and finds this essay, a small break-out discussion on what impact the iPad had on education and culture might be valuable.

It's always interesting to consider which past innovations proved to be game changers. I recently changed to a new satellite television provider and now have experienced for the first time the advantages of having a digital video recorder. It took all of 5 minutes for this innovation to become a game changer in my house. I think one could easily argue that the original Apple iPod, and the other similar devices, in combination with podcasting technologies, such as iTunes, has made fundamental change to the way information is broadcast to users.

What are the game changers in how we teach? First, it's important to remember that technology is defined as any application of useful knowledge for some practical purpose. There are both product technologies and idea technologies -- such as the iPod device and the podcasting idea -- though we tend as a society to only see technology as gadgets. I would argue that innovative pedagogies or teaching strategies, such as the use of cooperative learning, or role play, also constitute examples of instructional technology. Something doesn't have to be plugged-in to be a technology.

I would not be the first to imagine what a time traveler from 1910 would say upon encountering life in 2010. A time traveling doctor would recognize almost nothing about the way medicine is now practiced. This would be true for almost every profession, except perhaps teaching. A teacher from 1910 entering a modern classroom would likely recognize and understand most of the practices and methods being used. Projection systems and PowerPoint may dazzle them at first, but they would soon see these "modern blackboards" based on how they are typically used. The current use of student response systems (aka clickers) might be one innovation currently common in large lecture halls that would be disorienting to them.

The technology of gaming is another interesting example to consider. Educators in K-12, higher education, and the private sector are just beginning to embrace the technology of gaming, even though the idea of games has been around for thousands of years. Education has long been ambivalent toward gaming, with notable exceptions, such as the military. But many believe that the current technical sophistication of 3D immersive games represents a fundamental change for education. Again, we'll have to wait and see. Even if the technology affords new possibilities and opportunities, the question remains whether educators, and the educational system, will take advantage of it.

I am very interested in, and very inspired by, instructors who take advantage of easily accessible technologies to make a difference in their classrooms. These are the instructors who seem to constantly look for ways to be innovative or creative in their teaching, and don't seem to need large grants or top-down pressure to try new things. Consider a free tool such as Google Earth and the way it makes navigating and understanding geographical space and culture accessible, easy, and enjoyable. Most of their students probably already have it and use it (or Google Maps), so they know they don't have much front-end work to do to prepare students to use it. These are instructors who aren't afraid of taking some risks in their teaching, even though they know occasionally their new ideas fall flat. But, I would venture that students recognize these risks and appreciate instructors willing to take them.

So, when it comes to the "new normal" in the area of instructional technology in higher education, an instructor is well advised to look at the technologies their students are already using or other technologies that are readily available at little or no cost. Taking small risks in finding ways to leverage these everyday innovations in one's teaching may yield some powerful returns in student learning.

David Berle
Associate Professor of Horticulture

Service-learning is a valuable pedagogical tool. This has been proven in numerous studies and reports, and is supported by an ongoing SL Student Survey at UGA. Service-learning cannot

truly work without the knowing participation of a community partner, and the perceived benefit of the student project or activity. In other words, if the project does not address a need as determined by the recipient community partner, then the full potential of service-learning is not met. This is often the case when faculty initiate a community project of their own interest or merely as an exercise in learning. While there is merit in any effort to place students in real-world situations, without the input and recognition of a partner beyond the walls of the university, a valuable element is missing. As it turns out, based on survey results, students have the most positive experience in service-learning projects when there is interaction with an external community and clear progress toward community goals.